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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

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A radio talk by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered during the National Farm and Home Hour through a network of 46 associate NBC stations, December 22, 1931.

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Hello everybody: Last Tuesday when Mr. Salisbury signaled me "Time's up", I was talking about "star boarder" apple trees and the need for keeping records to see just what the individual trees are doing and then either removing the unproductive trees or working them over to make them profitable. Now it happens that a fruit tree, or a block of trees in a commercial orchard, may bear plenty of fruit but may be of a variety for which there is little or no demand. Competition is becoming keener every year and it is becoming increasingly difficult to produce fruit of all kinds that will meet the market requirements. In the case of wrong variety, this can often be corrected by topworking the trees to a desirable variety. Much depends upon the condition of the trees, because if the trees are not in a good healthy condition it will not pay to top-work them.

Home orchards frequently contain trees of varieties that were considered good thirty or forty years ago but which are no longer desirable. By topworking to varieties that are now considered desirable for home use the orchard can be saved and the grafted varieties in bearing within three or four years. First decide upon the varieties you want then arrange to get the grafts from good healthy trees of those varieties. These grafts should be cut during the winter and kept in a moist, cold place until spring just before the trees start. Now I could not give you the whole process of grafting the desirable varieties on your trees but I can send you a copy of Farmers' Bulletin No. 1567 on the Propagation of Trees and Shrubs, which contains illustrations and a description of just how grafting and budding are done. It is Farmer's Bulletin No. 1567.

Here is an idea for some of you folks who have only two or three apple trees on your small places for you can topwork two or three varieties upon one tree and thereby increase your range of varieties - just make a whole apple orchard out of your two or three trees. I have observed that many orchardists are following the plan of planting young trees wherever they have a vacancy in their orchards. Usually the young trees that are planted as renewals are given special fertilizing and cultivation to hasten their growth and bring them into bearing along with the remainder of the orchard.

There is no more reason for keeping a poor and unproductive fruit tree than there is for keeping an unproductive dairy cow. The milk scales and the record sheet turned the trick for the dairy industry and the bushel basket and careful grading will tell the story for the fruit industry. If we are in the business of producing fruit either for home use or for the market let us get on the right track and produce quality fruit. First of all get busy this winter and give your trees a careful pruning and a thorough spraying, then at the proper time fertilize them and follow up with the necessary cultivation and seasonal sprayings.

Here is another matter that I wish to bring to your attention today.

Early this month a meeting of the President's Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership was held in Washington. This conference covered practically every phase of home building and ownership including the landscaping and other improvements around the home. Home owners generally are I think becoming more home conscious and are giving more attention to the improvement of their home surroundings, including the planting of trees and shrubs, the care of lawns and the growing of flowers.

I am calling this matter to your attention at this time because right now these long winter evenings is a good time to make your plans for your improvements. Do you like to play checkers or games of that character? If you do you will enjoy drawing a sketch of your place and then by shifts and moves work out a plan for your improvements. After several evenings of this pleasant sort of diversion you will have a fairly accurate and satisfactory plan for your improvements. Let your plan include the orchard and the garden and any spaces around the farm buildings. Now if you need a little help both in making your plan and later for carrying it out let me suggest that you send for a copy of Farmer's Bulletin No. 1087 on Beautifying the Farmstead, then Farmer's Bulletin No. 1132 on Planning the Farmstead may be of help especially if you contemplate any changes in or additions to your farm layout.

We are going to make this a home improvement year and while we are waiting for business to get back to normal and the wheel's of progress to speed up again we may well spend a little time, and perhaps a very little money, in making a few improvements about our homes. In many cases these improvements involve very little except our own time and labor and the results are most gratifying.

Many of you have doubtless listened to the monthly programs of the Progressive Garden Club. We started this club on the air for the express purpose of interesting you folks in the improvements of your home surroundings. Several hundred people have written us asking to have their names entered as members of the club and we have sent them various bulletins on gardening and home improvement. Now you can become a member of this club and receive the literature simply by sending in your names and be sure to have your address in full with house number or rural route and box number. The next meeting of the club will be broadcast next Tuesday, December 29th as a part of the National Farm and Home Hour program. Farmer Brown and Mrs. Brown, Aunt Polly and all of the members of the club at this end will be present and besides we expect to have Mr. J. A. Evans, Associate Chief of the Office of Extension Work as our guest. So next Tuesday we'll be meeting you.